

WARREN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COMMITTEE: PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

DATE: FEBRUARY 25, 2011

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:

SUPERVISORS WOOD
SOKOL
TAYLOR
MCCOY
LOEB

OTHERS PRESENT:

REPRESENTING PLANNING & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:
PATRICIA TATICH, DIRECTOR
SHERI NORTON, GIS COORDINATOR
DANIEL G. STEC, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
JOANN MCKINSTRY, ASSISTANT TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
JOAN SADY, CLERK OF THE BOARD
KEVIN GERAGHTY, BUDGET OFFICER
SUPERVISOR THOMAS
DON LEHMAN, *THE POST STAR*
JOANNE COLLINS, LEGISLATIVE OFFICE SPECIALIST

Mrs. Wood called the meeting of the Planning & Community Development Committee to order at 10:53 a.m.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy, seconded by Mr. Loeb and carried unanimously to approve the minutes of the previous Committee meeting, subject to correction by the Clerk of the Board.

Privilege of the floor was extended to Patricia Tatich, Director of the Planning and Community Development.

Beginning with pending items, Ms. Tatich reported that a candidate was still needed from Warrensburg to fill the vacancy on the Warren County Planning Board. She noted there was also a vacancy for the Town of Chester.

Ms. Tatich stated that Sheri Norton, Geographical Information System (GIS) Coordinator would present information about the GIS and noted that Mr. McCoy had questions and concerns regarding the Town of Lake George. Ms. Tatich apprised that it would be necessary to create a plan for the Department in order to carry out GIS services for the municipalities, as well as the County. Messrs. Geraghty and McCoy agreed the New York State (NYS) Senate mandated E911 address requirement should not be the responsibility of the taxpayers. Mr. Taylor said he felt the municipalities had taken the responsibility due to the critical nature of the services, and to justify the budget. Ms. Tatich suggested that individuals who received the service pay the County directly. Mr. Geraghty recognized the necessity of GIS services; however, he said he felt the Towns should not be billed for same. Ms. Tatich advised that the process varied among the Towns and the County and lacked consistency among Town Assessors. Ms. Norton stated the inconsistencies undermined efficiency and noted that the County could process the requests with greater efficiency.

Ms. Tatich stated the County Planning Department continued to seek ways to develop revenue sources for County GIS services which would support the cost for Ms. Norton's time, and the overall continuation of services. It would be appropriate to review the proposed fee for service schedule and craft an updated schedule as appropriate.

In terms of ease of use, Ms. Norton explained that there were a series of tabs which could be selected and included items, such as aerial photos, wetland and snowmobile trail information, which provided basic information for realtors or other individuals conducting property research work. From

a visual standpoint, she apprised that aerial photos taken by NYS, zoning information, and a series of data sets could be downloaded as needed. She said the data sets could be downloaded by the user, to avoid network traffic overload. It was an intentional strategy, she stated, as it was prohibitive to load excessive amounts of data at one time. Ms. Norton said that she would be happy to assist Supervisors with the site.

Ms. Tatich advised that the northern portions of Warren County lacked satisfactory broadband service and the compromised speed limited users to one map. She urged advocacy efforts for higher speed broadband in those areas. She further stated that E911 address information was critical for optimum emergency response as it allowed for precise location identification.

Motion was made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Loeb to recommend that the Planning & Community Development Department collect the fees incurred for E911 address services rendered.

Ms. Tatich noted that an amendment to the existing fee schedule which was approved by the Board of Supervisors would be needed. She explained that Ms. Norton could carry out the necessary work from a remote site using aerial photo imagery which required an estimated 30 minutes. She added that the time spent at the remote scenario could require up to two hours, which included driving to the site with the equipment, the return trip to the Office to load the data, conduct a measurement, and complete the form. She said the estimated cost was between \$15 to \$30 for the desk-site method of information collection and \$30 to \$60 for a site visit for data collection.

Mr. McCoy explained that the concern in the Town of Lake George was the influx of bills for which there was no mechanism to collect payments. He noted that those who were billed had not responded to the invoices. Subsequently, he said, taxpayers were bearing the expense when the individuals using the services should be held responsible.

A discussion ensued and Mr. Loeb opined that the E911 address information could be included with property requirements, such as utility hookup, sewer and water and telephone land lines which were paid for by the homeowner. Ms. Norton concurred and compared the scenario to building permit issuance where the permit was not transferred until payment was received. Furthermore, she said, the applicant was the sole beneficiary of the services rendered, which further justified the concept. In terms of the budget process, Ms. Tatich said it was unmanageable for the Towns due to their inability to forecast E911 expenses.

Ms. Wood asked if the Committee agreed to table the issue until the next meeting to allow Ms. Tatich time to review the fee schedule. Ms. Tatich agreed it would be prudent to review the entire fee schedule prior to taking action. Mr. Geraghty said he felt it was reasonable to set fees based on the amount of work involved.

Mr. McCoy withdrew his motion regarding the collection of E911 fees and Mr. Loeb withdrew his second to the motion. It was consensus of the Committee to revisit the matter at a future Committee meeting.

Ms. Norton redistributed a GIS System Feasibility information sheet to the Committee and noted that Wayne LaMothe, Assistant Director of Planning & Community Development, had distributed the information at the previous Committee meeting. She advised that most communities had a desktop GIS, and she noted the wide variations of operating systems, software, and customizations made possible through grant funding, had encumbered the process and were costly. She expressed the need for uniformity in lieu of the varied systems used throughout the County which numbered over

20 and recommended a central web-based next generation system. Ms. Norton apprised that she would be responsible for the data and software and the municipalities would require a browser only. Ms. Tatich summarized the cost requirements of the GIS which included an annual maintenance fee of \$1,000 and a dedicated cable at an estimated cost of \$50 per month. She noted that the County already had two servers as well as fiber optic connectivity and expressed the need to migrate to a uniform, new generation system. She said the information presented today was for the benefit of the Committee and she had not presented an action item at this time relative to the GIS.

Ms. Norton informed that Schenectady County had a successful experience with the GIS. Mr. McCoy stated that eliminating the need for Ms. Norton to travel to the municipalities would result in cost savings. Ms. Norton pointed out another advantage was the support available from the Information Technology (IT) Department. She noted that her Department already had the mechanism to extract property data and would need to meet with IT to discuss the application requirements for the electronic transfer of data. Mr. Taylor asked if the annual cost of the system could be offset by Ms. Norton's increased efficiency and Ms. Norton stated that it had not been determined at this time.

Ms. Tatich informed that an affiliate organization comprised of Planning Director's from the State had met at the recent NYS Association of Counties (NYSAC) Conference. She said a speaker from the Department of State had informed the group of Senate Bill No. 5560 which was passed in September of 2010, and established a Smart Growth project approval process. Ms. Tatich expounded the bill called for the creation of a group of agencies to evaluate funding requests of communities to ensure Smart Growth planning efforts. She asserted her displeasure with the bill which she felt was not in the best interest of rural communities and noted it was a method by which the State could decline funding in an acceptable manner. She said that all or most of Warren County was considered rural and the bill addressed urban and suburban communities only. Ms. Tatich said she would email a copy of the bill to the Committee members. She added that the Empire State Futures Group was established last year to advance Smart Growth programs. Although there were some positives, she said, with limited State resources it presented a funding roadblock. Mr. Thomas noted that the type of approach used by the State, of not recognizing municipalities by size, had become commonplace.

There being no further business to come before the Planning & Community Development Committee, on motion made by Mr. McCoy and seconded by Mr. Loeb, Mrs. Wood adjourned the meeting at 11:41 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Joanne Collins, Legislative Office Specialist